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RESCUE OF THE DROWNING MANDARIN.

TALES ILLUSTRATIVE OF CHINESE LIFE AND MANNERS.

THE MISSIONARY AND THE MANDARIN.—CHAPTER II.

VERY different was the scene in which the disciple and teacher of the gospel, and the follower
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of Confucius and worshipper of pure reason, met again, some two short months after their parting on the joyous banks of the Poyang lake. The missionary had been travelling in the interior of the country, and in good part among mountainous

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or hilly regions, where little was heard even of the mighty "Son of the Sea," or his destructive inundations; but he was again approaching that great river, at a point about 250 miles above the Poyang.

As he drew near to the river, he heard strange rumours of tempests and floods, and immense loss of property and human life; and on reaching the ridge of a chain of mountains, which immediately flanked the valley of the great river, he could see with his own eyes many signs of a recent inundation. In many places the champaign country appeared to be converted into a lake, and boats and punts were moving about among the tops of trees and the roofs of houses. Such, indeed, was the case in every valley or hollow that had an artificial embankment, or any slight natural elevation between it and the Yang-tse-Kiang. On descending from the ridge into the plain, he found encamped or rudely huddled a great number of people who had been driven from their homes, and in good part ruined by the sudden encroachment of the water, and he heard tales still more dismal of loss of life and property. But the river by this time had carried off its excess to the all-capacious ocean, and was running within its usual banks in a somewhat rapid but equable course.

A still nearer approach, however, betrayed to the traveller's sight, evidence to prove that the accounts he had heard in the upland country were little, if at all, exaggerated. On either bank of the stream, were villages which had been almost entirely washed away, great junks that had been stranded and left high and dry by the receding waters, swollen corpses of human beings, drowned oxen, buffaloes, sheep and goats; while here and there were seen the bodies of tigers, panthers, lynxes, wild boars, bears and other savage animals which had been washed out of their native jungles and brought down and deposited where they lay by the impetuous torrent. The road along the river bank was in some parts altogether destroyed and obliterated, and in the other parts converted into a quagmire. But along it the missionary and his poor Corean servant forced their way, until, towards nightfall, they reached a small fishing town or village close on the left bank of the river. Here were fresh signs of the recent mischief and devastation: the bridge, which crossed a canal and led directly into the village, was partially destroyed, planks and huge bamboos being thrown across the spaces where the arches had given way, and the triumphal arch at the head of the bridge was now only half an arch, one portion standing, and the fragments of the other half lying along the bank of the canal; a tall pagoda, long the pride and boast of the place, sapped in its basement, was quite prostrate, and in its fall it had demolished a spacious khan or reception house for travellers; the main street of the village was nearly knee-deep in mud; the gardens and orchards on either side of the way were thickly coated with the alluvia or deposits left by the recent inundation, and not a few of the houses had been wholly or partially levelled with the ground.

The people had not yet recovered from their consternation or from the effect of their sudden and great losses; most of the shops and stalls seemed to be deserted, and there was only one small, dingy,

and filthy inn (already crowded to excess) open for the reception of the wayfarers. This house stood on a little eminence immediately above the river, which here made a bight or little bay, along which huge vultures and other carrion birds were making a splendid feast on the corpses and carcases which had been there left by the receding torrent. Everything round about it or near to it was dreary, comfortless, and ghostly, as was the house itself. The aged host wore so grim a countenance that one would have said he had never known what it was to smile. He ushered the missionary and his man into a crowded room, where the smell of the opium pipe was so strong and sickening, that the stranger from the West was well nigh fainting as he entered. The demon of despair seemed to have possession of all the inmates, for, save three or four that were lying asleep or senseless among some rice straw on the ground, every one of them was plying the opium pipe.

But what have we here? Among the most determined or desperate of the smokers was the great and brilliant mandarin of Poyang, the philosopher, the worshipper of pure reason, the man who had no vices, and who had torn up his follies by the roots! What a change! His splendid retinue was reduced to two or three common serving-men, the rest having gone to look after their own houses and families, or having decamped under the impulse of the instinct which bids selfish people quit an unlucky or ruined man as quickly as possible; his garments of silks and satins and costly embroidery were all soiled; the magnificent tail on which he had previously very much prided himself was unknotted, thrown loose about his shoulders and body, quite unkempt and uncared for; some of the long finger nails, upon which he, like other Chinese gentlemen, had much prided himself, were broken off short, the rest being dirty; his face was already assuming the sickly, ghastly, and unnatural hue which is sure to be induced by any continued use of the opium pipe, and the hand which held his pipe was tremulous, like that of a hard-drinking man. Although the missionary salaamed to him three or four times, he did not recognise him: the pernicious drug was working at his brain, his eyes were fixed on vacancy, and he seemed to hear no more than he saw. Presently, as if in wrath, he threw the pipe from him to the other end of the saloon, fetched a long deep sigh, and went into an unconscious monologue of this sort:—"Where is now my red ball? Where the peacock's tail? Much if I do not lose my blue ball, and be degraded to the lowest rank! My dyke, my embankments, to give way, and to give way the first of all, and be the cause of the destruction of others! My houses, my full granaries, my gardens and orchards, my flocks and herds, where are they? But why mourn for them, when wives and children all are gone, and not one left to perpetuate my memory and perform for me the rites in the Hall of Ancestors. Best to be dead at once! Best to die now before the heavy punishments of the viceroy fall upon me! Better be dead! best to be dead!"

He muttered a few more syllables, but his voice became quite indistinct, and soon, with a sigh and a groan, he fell back on the dirty cushions of the divan in a state that was more like death than healthy sleep.

The missionary could not but gaze at the rest of the company. It was a horrible, and at the same time a grotesque scene. Some of them, as we have said, were stretched on the floor; on these the pipe had had its full effect; others, as motionless as Buddhist statues in a pagoda or idols in a Joss-house, were sitting on their heels and staring with that vacant unearthly stare that had recently been seen in the eyes of the mandarin; others were rolling about in the divan like boats in a stormy sea, or making all manner of hideous grimaces and contortions; two or three seemed very much disposed to be outrageously violent and to run amuck, while, every minute or two one of them would groan and roll over, as the humbled grandee had done. It was not a scene to be long looked upon, and the atmosphere of the room and of the whole house was so oppressive and sickening, that the missionary could not bear it. So, instead of trying to sleep in the inn, he took up his quarters in a boat-house outside, close to the river bank. This was a comfortable place enough, for it had been recently under water, and some of the thick bamboos and nearly all the thatch or plaited grass that formed the roof had been washed away; but it was better to be cold and damp than to breathe that poisoned air, and the missionary could see through the roof the blue firmament and the bright moon and the countless stars of the southern hemisphere. Well was it for the worshipper of reason, that the minister of the gospel slept here this night!

The missionary's slumbers were light and not long. By daylight he was on the alert, and giving orders to his Corean as to a few preparations for continuing their journey in the course of the day. He had no thought of starting early, hoping to see the mandarin when he should have recovered from the effects of the opium pipe, and half hoping to find him more impressionable to religion than he had been in the high days of his prosperity, and thus to be the means of doing him good. But he had not been long risen, and, apparently, nobody in the inn or in the village was stirring, when he heard a great splash in the river, and then a faint scream. He guessed at the truth, nor was he deceived. On rushing out, followed by his servant, he saw the mandarin nearly midway in the stream, and being carried down by it. He ran along the bank to a point below where the drowning man was, and then dashed into the river, still followed by the Corean, who uttered loud wild yells as he swam. Both were good swimmers; but before they could reach the mandarin, he had sunk twice, and was going down senseless the third time. The missionary caught the unfortunate man, just in time, by his long loose hair, and, with the help of his servant, brought him to the surface of the water and supported him there. But the mandarin was a heavy man, and had swallowed a great deal of water; the current, too, at this reach of the river, was very strong, so that there was some danger of all three being washed away and lost.

The cries of the Corean had brought a good many people out to the river bank, but not a single Chinaman attempted to put out a boat or make any effort for the rescue: they all looked on as if this were a matter that did not concern them. This, to us, unaccountable indifference of the

Chinese to human life, and particularly to cases like the present, has very often been remarked by European travellers; but it is common to the whole of the Mongol race, and to other eastern peoples. There is a wide-spread superstition that if you save a drowning man—even though he be your dearest friend, or your own brother—he will be sure to work you mischief, and be eventually your murderer, or the direct cause of your sudden and tragical death. Then, with the Chinese and others, certain most absurd and inhuman police and governmental regulations render the saving of the life of a fellow-creature a very dangerous matter; the man who goes to the rescue being arrested and imprisoned that he may account for the accident, and being not rarely condemned for homicide or murder, for having done that for which, in ancient Rome, he would have received the civic crown, and in England the medal of the Humane Society, together with the admiration and respect of his fellow-countrymen.

The Chinese villagers were composedly looking on, and the three men in the water were in still increasing danger, when a large and very splendid junk swept round the point and past the village, and came down with the stream close to the missionary, who hailed the people on board, while the Corean screamed for help. The mariners and passengers in the junk seemed determined to be quite as indifferent as the people on shore; but a young and richly-attired man came to the gangway, and discovered in the mandarin, who was now, with those who supported him, close alongside the vessel, the person of his own father!

The young man uttered a loud scream, but had sufficient presence of mind to throw over a coil of rope; and nearly all on board at once made a rush to that side of the vessel. With such aid, the streaming trio were soon on the deck of the junk, where two other youths, two young ladies, and one elderly lady, gathered round the senseless mandarin, with loud shrill lamentations.

"It is my husband! It is our dear father!" cried they; "but, alas, we have found him only to find him dead!"

"Not so," said the missionary; "there is yet life in him; and I will engage, with the help of Heaven, soon to restore him to you. But you must moderate your transports, and implicitly and instantly obey such instructions as I shall give for his recovery. Be quiet, silent, attentive, and all will go well!"

Making a great effort, the women ceased weeping and wailing and tearing their garments; the young men (all three the mandarin's sons), assisted by some of the junk's crew, carried the apparently lifeless body into the chief cabin, and laid it at its length on the floor. The missionary, with abundance of assistance, and all the appliances necessary, then proceeded to carry out our well-known simple rules for restoring suspended animation in such cases; and in a few minutes the effect of them was seen in a slight heaving of the chest, and a tremulous, very faint motion of the lips and hands.

"Praised be the One only Ruler of heaven and earth!" said the missionary; "he is safe, he is reviving fast; but still be silent, and keep at a greater distance, that he may have plenty of air."

The wife and the five children knelt on the floor, in a semicircle opposite the body, the missionary and the Corean knelt behind it to prop it up, and everybody else, as requested, quitted the cabin. Though without any premeditation, prearrangement, or concert, the grouping was eminently picturesque, and the whole scene soft, soothing, and striking. As is very frequently the case in first-class junks, the chief cabin of this vessel was an exceedingly handsome, rather spacious, and richly furnished apartment: it was hung all round with silk of a most delicate cerulean blue colour, studded here and there with silver sconces, and small round silver plates standing out from the blue silk, like stars in the firmament. In one of the sconces, immediately behind the mandarin and his supporters, there was burning a fine, thick, perfumed wax taper; but the room was chiefly lighted through the broad door, which opened on the after-deck: a curtain of the finest gauze, as transparent as the celebrated fabric of ancient Cos, and of the same delicate colour as the silk hangings, was suspended at the door-way, and imparted an exquisitely soft tint to the light which came through it into the cabin. There reigned in the apartment just that degree of mingled light and darkness which our neighbours the French call *demi-jour*, or half-day, every object being visible enough, but softened down and harmonised, and exhibiting no sharp outline, or anything that was harsh, hard, or decided. Most of the light fell upon the kneeling family, whose upraised faces were right opposite the taper.

In a few more seconds the mandarin opened his eyes, and their first glance fell upon his wife and dear children. He uttered a faint exclamation, closed his eyes, rubbed them as if in doubt, slowly opened them again, and looked at the group before him with a bewildered and half unconscious gaze. The family now all wept for joy; but one of the young ladies (his favourite daughter, as it afterwards appeared) began gently to warble a little air which her father had always loved to hear, and which, unlike most Chinese music, had real melody and a delicate cadence in it. The music seemed at once to complete the resuscitation; he raised himself from the cushions which the missionary and his servant had arranged for him; he sat up, bolt upright, he almost sprang to his feet, and gazing intently at his children, he muttered, in a tone which gradually became more and more distinct, "Where am I? What soft, sweet scene of bliss is this? Can this be paradise? Can that Llama of the West have spoken truth? Is there in very deed a life after death, a world beyond the grave? Are these, indeed, my dear children? Do I see them, hear them, once again; or is this all an illusion? Come near, and let me touch you!"

His daughters rose from their knees and embraced him one by one, and his wife and his sons did the like. It is possible that some of the effects of the opium-pipe were yet working on the poor man's brain, that all the waters of the Yangtse-Kiang had not washed away that vile poison; for the poor man was slow in recovering the use of his reason, and had evidently great difficulty in connecting his ideas, or combining the past with

the present—his sinking, suffocated, senseless, in the deep rapid river, and his being here, alive, in the flesh, in a room which looked like a chamber of paradise, with his children around him. After much rambling talk, and many fond embraces, he exclaimed passionately, "I now feel that there was truth in what the stranger told me, and that I was a fool to be so self-confident, presumptuously to believe that I could do all or bear all; that my pure reason was as a god! Oh that I could once more meet that Llama of the West!"

"My friend," said the missionary, rising, and stepping forward, "I am here; I am entirely at your service, for many hours or for many days if you will. By the blessing and help of the Creator and Saviour I adore, I have saved your mortal life: let me now endeavour to save your immortal soul!"

The mandarin was more astonished and perplexed than ever; but the minister of the Gospel talked gently and most patiently to him, and by degrees brought him to understand all that had happened, and how he and his family were still inmates of this nether world, alive like other people, safe in the cabin of a stately junk, and not in the world that is to be hereafter. And now the restored man missed his second wife and one of his children. Where were they? Why not here with the rest? The fact was, they were lost when the rest were saved.

The tale was soon told. When the terrible "Son of the Sea" suddenly rose and dashed over its banks, and swept away the dykes and all other barriers, they were on a visit at a house in a valley, which was the first to be submerged. They were drowned, with two or three servants who had accompanied them. All the rest of the family were at a greater distance from the river, and had time to escape to the ridge of a little hill before the inundation could reach them. The hasty common rumour that had reported them all as drowned, had also considerably exaggerated the amount of the property destroyed; for though his fine house had been levelled with the ground, and most of his flocks and herds swept away, yet several of his granaries and storehouses had escaped, or had been only slightly injured. Other property of a valuable kind had not been touched by the flood, and much of the farm land would be improved, rather than deteriorated, by lying for a season under water. In short, enough remained to keep the mandarin, if not in all his former greatness, yet in a tolerable condition of prosperity and wealth. As to his family losses, if one wife and a child were gone, another wife and five children remained to him; and as he had believed that *all* had perished, his joy at the recovery of so many of them, left him, at first, hardly time to grieve for those who were lost.

As the inundation had abated, the family had embarked in this junk to descend the great river in search of the mandarin, who was expected to be on his way home, and who might (as really happened) receive sinister and false reports. They had intended to stop at a very large central city, not far from the river, where they had connections and friends, and where they were most likely to receive intelligence from the lower country. As the head of the family did not deem it expedient

to make any change in this destination, but thought it would be well to bide for a time in that town, the junk pursued its course down the Yang-tse-Kiang.

When the morning had advanced some two or three hours, and the mandarin had recovered his self-composure, the missionary left the cabin and went on the fore-deck. He found that the vessel had quitted the river, and was proceeding up a magnificent canal, so common a feature in Chinese scenery. The canal communicated with a spacious and beautiful lake, the clear waters of which seemed swarming with fish. Numerous rafts, boats, and barges, with small wooden houses erected upon them, were moored near the banks, or slowly gliding over the lake, their bamboo sails clinging to the masts, or scarcely stirred by the very light breeze which blew. Many of the floating houses were permanent habitations for families, and had their little flower gardens, and even kitchen gardens and floating orchards. Everywhere, along the great rivers and canals, and on the numerous lakes, there exists a floating population like this; and it has been calculated that in many parts of China there are as many people living on the water as on the dry land.

Most of the larger vessels were surrounded by fleets of ducks, a bird much relished in the country, and easily supported; and in many of them, men, boys, or women were employed in taking fish with the fishing cormorant. This voracious fowl is so thoroughly tamed and broken in, that he dives into the water, brings up his fish, and delivers it, quietly and discreetly, and without any attempt to mangle it, into the hands of his master or mistress. It is true, however, that the precaution is generally taken of placing an iron ring round his neck, which would effectually prevent his swallowing a fish of any size. When the cormorant has fished enough, or brought in prey sufficient to satisfy his master, the ring is removed, and he is left to fish on his own account, or to eat whatever he catches. It was a cheerful, and yet a tranquillizing scene. The land round the lake being rather elevated, had suffered little from the recent inundation; the villages, with their slender pagodas, were uninjured, and the faces of the white cottages shone out beautifully from among gardens and orchards, or groves of the tall growing large-leaved bamboo. It was difficult to think of all the moral darkness, irreligion, vice, and misery that really inhabited those pretty, peaceful-looking villages. Beyond the lake there was another fine canal, and beyond that another and a much more spacious lake, at the upper end of which, partly at the edge of the water and partly on some gently-swellling hills, stood the populous city, where the party on board the junk soon found good accommodation.

The missionary now renewed his spiritual instructions, and with excellent effect. The mandarin's misfortunes, and consequent weaknesses, had quite humbled his pride and expelled his self-conceit. The scene in the cabin was one which no time or any after impressions could efface, and his gratitude to his preserver was boundless. His became, indeed, a lowly, penitent, and obedient heart; and, before the good missionary left them,

he and all his family, with not a few of their connections and friends, were hopefully instructed in the faith of Christ.

THE PHENOMENA OF CRIMINAL LIFE.

EDUCATION AND AUTHORSHIP AMONGST CRIMINALS.

CRIMINALS are, for the greater part, notoriously illiterate and ignorant. Whether they are so beyond the non-criminal class in their grade of life, or not, has not yet been sufficiently shown; probably they are not so. One thing is certain, however, the higher you go with your comparison in crime, the higher you will find, as a general rule, the degree of education. Criminal persons convicted summarily by a magistrate exhibit the lowest state of ignorance; criminals convicted at quarter sessions, a degree above this; convicted at the assizes a still higher; and again, if of these you take the criminals of longest sentences, they will be found to possess a state of education far beyond that of the honest and virtuous poor. This is no valid argument, however, against the extension of popular education, which, like everything good, has its abuse as well as its use: but, then, it should abate the confidence of the philosopher, who has so much faith in secular knowledge as a prevention of crime, and so little in the teachings of religion.

The fact appears to be, that education gives an increase of power, both for good and for evil purposes; and if it lessens the temptations to certain sorts of vice and criminality, it stimulates to others, and qualifies a bad man for the perpetration of crimes more detrimental and costly to society. Thus, the accomplished swindler and the skilful forger are far more injurious than the vagrant and the drunken sot; the revolutionist and infidel propagandist, than their illiterate dupes. Education changes the character, not of the man, but of his crimes. But to pass on to another phase of the subject.

Looking at a crowd of prisoners in a gaol-yard in uniform, it is very curious to observe how distinctly marked in their faces are the extremes, at least, of "little or no education" and of "much." A well-practised eye will not often fail, upon the first view, to assign to each his proper place in the scale of education. Previous difference of station has its influence, doubtless, in affixing a character to the countenance, but mental cultivation has most. Upon leaving a prison, the disparity between the classes is sensibly diminished, that is, where the confinement has been of considerable length. Stolid ignorance has advanced a step or two towards intellectual expansion; the tolerably educated have made little or no progress, and some have retrograded. But when we speak of the ignorance of criminals, it is chiefly in respect to their want of knowledge in educational matters, and in the things of religion. It is often astonishing to see how acute and quick is the apprehension of some men ignorant of letters, in things in which they are interested, and how capable they are of acting parts of cunning and duplicity sufficient to baffle people of good education and of some acquaintance even with the world. To men of this sort, the intricacies and nice distinctions of cri-

minal jurisprudence present little perplexity. They are good "Old Bailey lawyers." They have been "concerned" in many cases, in more perhaps than the most of those who wear "wig and gown," and have studied a multitude of precedents and law cases, in various courts of justice and within the walls of various prisons. Criminals of this class often assert their innocence, because of some known defect in the legal evidence. The answer we usually give, is: "It is likely enough; a bad character and bad companionship have condemned many a man on insufficient evidence; but as you have often escaped the meshes of the law when you were guilty, you must now be content with its uncertainty when against you, and take patiently the consequences of your whole evil life."

The intellectual improvement of some criminals, previously uneducated, is so great as to make us almost question whether we had not been deceived at the first. With others, previously educated in some degree, further instruction, notwithstanding every effort to counteract the tendency, results in the adoption of the most pedantic and grotesquely grandiloquent form of expression, so that their letters to friends are not permitted to pass until brought down to a style bordering on the sobriety and simplicity of ordinary language. The prison schoolmasters can always do more good with the wholly untaught than with the partly educated, in whom vanity and self-conceit so generally predominate.

With rapidly acquired superficial knowledge there often springs up the desire to communicate it; in fact, to become authors for the benefit of mankind. The passion for authorship assumes generally the poetic form; and sometimes effusions of this kind come across our notice, not devoid of merit, although not perhaps condescending to adopt the mechanical admeasurement of verse, or even the accuracies of orthography. Clever rogues often pirate the compositions of others, both within as well as without the walls of a prison. In a note, we append a rough list of manuscripts picked up in a London prison, during a year or so, by an intelligent collector of such literary curiosities. Whether the outer world is ever to be favoured with their publication or not, is more than doubtful in my opinion, although not so in the sanguine expectations of the authors. They have, at all events, one uncommon sort of merit amongst authors—they are legible.*

A few particulars about some of these literary characters, and their productions, will here not be out of place.

The author of the "Treatise on Indigestion" was a surgeon, convicted twice of the crime of

forgery, most deliberately committed. For the first offence he received a very long sentence; but having proved himself exceedingly useful, in the time when cholera raged amongst the convicts at Woolwich, some ten years back, he received the Queen's pardon. On his second conviction, I became acquainted with him. He made very light of his crime, and treated it as a necessity in his case; for "he had," he said, "only the choice of the poorhouse or the prison before him." Thus he chose to have the money with the chance, or even with the certainty of the gaol. When in prison, however, he was anxious enough to get out, and I recollect him urging his wife, by letter, to "solicit Lord Shaftesbury to intercede for a remission of his terrible life-sentence," adding, "Be sure you state that the bill was only for £300." Poor Lord Shaftesbury! what correspondents he must have, even in this one branch of roguery and swindle! He should have a detective for his secretary, and, if it might be, an angel for his almoner.

The author of certain "Poems, Comic and Grave," was a more consummate villain. He, too, was twice convicted of the "gentlemanly" crime of "obtaining money under false pretences," which requires a combination of qualities such as are usually found in persons of the higher classes—a fashionable appearance and equipage, and an easy address. To these must be added art, artifice, and cunning, to disarm the suspicions of the tradesman. In all these, this unhappy man excelled. He was, indeed, a "born gentleman," an educated Etonian, and the companion of young men of undoubted rank and character, until his crimes became notorious. He had his cabriolet and groom, his stall at the opera, his etc. etc. He occupied the most respectable quarters until his first break-down, and, at the time, supported himself partly by his share of a paternal estate (encumbered by a father's extravagance, who was only a shade better than his profligate son), and by fleecing his "friends" at the gambling table, at which he was a terrible adept. Upon his first release, by conditional pardon, in the colonies, he was more than ordinarily well recommended by the governor of the gaol, who, from his own wardrobe, provided him with a gentlemanly outfit. Thus, well dressed, well recommended, and highly accomplished, he readily obtained employment abroad; and we, who thought we knew the man better, were horrified to hear that his engagement was as "resident tutor in a gentleman's family." How he got on in that capacity we never learned. Whether he played the hypocrite successfully all through, or whether his true character was discovered before he consummated the ruin of some of the family, we know not. We hope it was. At last, at all events, his time being up, he came back, and entered at once on his old line of life, with some drawbacks, indeed; but, on the whole, with greater advantages perhaps than before, towards successful villany. His character and appearance were new to most. He was a man of travel; and he came from "the land of gold." He took up his residence now in the north, instead of the west-end of the metropolis, and, contriving to ingratiate himself into the favour of a respectable widow, he proposed marriage and was ac-

* Poems on a great variety of subjects, grave and comic.

Many.

Essays, moral and didactic, including a legend, entitled,

"Dyspepsia Diaboli." Several.

Autobiographies. Very numerous.

Reform of Prisons, etc. Several.

Inhumanity of the Cellular System of Prison Discipline.

Several.

Excellency of the System. Several.

Plans for Improving Public Morals. Several.

Sermons preached in a Prison, etc.; original. By a prisoner. Several.

A Treatise on Indigestion. By a Surgeon.

The Book of Common Prayer Reformed. By a Clergyman;

and a Metrical Version of Job. By the same. Etc. etc. etc.

cepted; but, during the preparations, he swindled her of property to the extent of hundreds of pounds, and was preparing to decamp, when, happily for society, he was apprehended, through the watchful jealousy of another female at the west-end, and was again convicted of swindling, and re-transported.

The author of "Dyspepsia Diabali," and other poems, was not a swindler, nor a practised thief of any kind. He seems to have perpetrated only one crime of dishonesty. He was a genius of another sort. Inflated with vanity, and fond of society and applause, he neglected his honest, vulgar business, got into money embarrassments, and "having no fear of God before his eyes," he committed the crime for which he was exiled, and became the companion of men whom he had always looked upon with unmitigated scorn and disgust. The following stanzas, in honour of his wife, will show the man and the poet:—

"When sober twilight's dusky shade
Brings pensiveness to me;
And madden'd thought to rest is laid,
My heart, love, turns to thee,
Though dark my fate, yet darker far
That fate had proved to be,
Did not thy love, like gentle star,
Beam sweetly upon me.

"Yet dreadful is the thought, and keen
The anguish of regret!
That thou, love, wouldst have happier been
Had we but never met.
Successive shades of grief and woe
Have darken'd life to thee—
Since in young love's unsullied flow
Thou gav'st thy hand to me.

"Kind Heaven to thee in mercy sent
One gleam of short-lived joy,
When thy fair face in rapture bent
O'er thy beloved boy.
'Twas but a gleam; for oh! how soon
He into stillness pass'd,
And o'er thy rest and lonely home
A deeper gloom was cast!

"Yet 'mid the errors, mad and wild,
That grieved thy gentle heart,
On me thy face hath ever smiled;
To pardon—was thy part.
And now, when round the wanderer lone
Despair's black vapours roll,
Thy love with brighter light hath shone
To cheer his stricken soul.

"If mortal prayer for others' weal
Availeth aught on high,
Thy cherish'd name, when'er I kneel,
Is wafted to the sky.
Him who hath wreck'd thy spirit's peace
Thou ne'er again may'st see;
But night and day, I'll never cease
To think, my love, of thee."

NEW READING-ROOM AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

SINCE the beginning of January, 1855, a great national work—one in every way worthy of such a designation—has been making its rapid and silent progress, out of view of the public, within the quadrangle inclosed by the walls of the British Museum. Owing to the vast increase in the numbers of books, manuscripts, maps, etc., yearly added to the national library—an increase amounting in a single year to more than ten thousand volumes; owing also to a corresponding increase in the numbers who resorted to the Museum to profit by these increasing stores; the erection of a suitable reading-room, for the stowage of the literary treasures and the accommodation of literary students, had long been a pressing desideratum.

Such a reading-room the public may now boast of possessing. Within the space of little more than two years there has risen, on the spot above indicated, the largest circular-domed edifice in the whole world, with the single exception of that of the Pantheon at Rome—a building which men of science will come from far to see, and which may be the admiration of generations yet unborn. We must endeavour briefly to describe this building for the gratification of our readers. Standing as it does entirely screened from view by the outer buildings of the Museum, it is only by description that the generality of the public will become acquainted with it. The pedestrian will not discover it in his perambulations; and the country visitor to London, even though he may explore the thousand wonders of nature, of antiquity, and of art in the surrounding galleries, may chance to go away ignorant of its very existence.

The new reading-room is approached through the grand entrance of the national Museum. Crossing the entrance-hall, we traverse a long matted corridor, and, pushing open a door that swings noiselessly on its hinges, find ourselves at once beneath the majestic sweep of a dome, rising over a hundred feet in the air, inclosing a circular space of a hundred and forty feet in diameter, and flooded with light which casts no positive shadow on any part of the surface. On the vast level floor, which is covered with a new kind of carpet, partaking apparently of the nature of felt, and which refuses to return an echo to the heaviest footfall, there are a series of handsome desk-rows, starting within a few feet of the circumference, and converging towards the centre. The desks, thus arranged, are sufficient in number to accommodate three hundred readers at a time, and the accommodation is really something princely in its way. Thus each reader has in reality a separate table to himself, not less than four feet three inches in length, of ample depth, and furnished with a convenient reading-stand, a shelf for books of reference, and the materials for writing—to say nothing of a seat of aldermanic ease and amplitude. But the accommodations do not stop here. As the rows of desks converge from the circumference towards the centre, there are necessarily wide spaces between the outer radii. These are not left vacant, but furnished with large library-tables and seats available for the unfolding of maps, plans, etc., or the consulting of huge newspaper files.

In the centre of the wide area is raised the superintendent's platform, communicating by a passage, screened off by a fence-work of plate glass, with the surrounding libraries. Under the eye of the superintendent are the agents, whose duty it is to administer to the wants of the readers, by supplying them with the books they demand. Around the superintendent's inclosure, in two concentric circles, are the catalogue-tables—the catalogues being ranged on shelves beneath, and the tops, supplied with pens, ink, and application tickets, serving as a general writing-desk. The reader will perceive that in our accompanying illustration some of these details are omitted; but this omission could not well be supplied without marring the effect of the picture. But we have not yet done with the floor. Round the extreme circumference of the apartment, and apparently

forming the walls of it, are the shelves containing the books of reference—books, that is, in all languages and on all subjects, forming the standard class-books of Britain and the continental nations. These, which certainly are as many as twenty thousand volumes in number, the reader is expected to find out and help himself to when he wants them, without troubling the assistants. At the first blush, the idea of finding a book you want among all these myriads, seems hopeless without assistance; but, in fact, nothing can be easier—for you cannot sit down anywhere but a coloured lithographed plan of the reference-library stares you in the face, and tells you instantly where to look for what you want. Monotonous and puzzling as looks the endless coil of volumes on the shelves, the plan shows you what each press contains, and refers you by numbers to a particular press for each particular subject. Another convenient plan for saving time may be mentioned, and that is, that all the reading-desks being numbered, the reader, on sending in his ticket for a book, has only to specify on it at what desk he has placed himself, and the book, as soon as possible, will be brought to him by an attendant.

But to look now a little higher. Above the books of reference, at a height of some dozen feet, runs all round a light iron gallery, used as a means of access to tens of thousands of volumes more; and, above that again, another gallery of like construction gives access to a third enormous library. All together the shelves within the dome contain not less than eighty thousand volumes. In order that the shadow of the galleries may not fall on the backs of the books, and make the lettering illegible, the galleries are not only perforated, but are made to project forward some twenty inches, through which space the light from the roof and the windows above falls without interruption.

From the projecting cornice above the third tier of bookshelves, the magnificent dome takes its forward spring, the several compartments, twenty in number, meeting in a handsome circular skylight, at a height of over a hundred feet. Each compartment contains an arched window, twenty-seven feet high and twelve in width, and these, together with the central lantern above, supply such an abundance of light, as would be looked for in vain in any private dwelling. It is owing to this abundance of light, perhaps, that the feeling of which one is often conscious while reading in the new room is mainly due. We allude to the idea which we have often heard expressed, that while sitting there one feels out of doors, and would not be surprised, at the end of an interesting chapter, to find one's self sitting in field or forest under a tree—unless one was surprised at the absence of a draught of air. But this very agreeable effect may be due in part to two other things which are specially worthy of notice. These are the style of decoration, and the system of ventilation, concerning each of which we must say but a word or two.

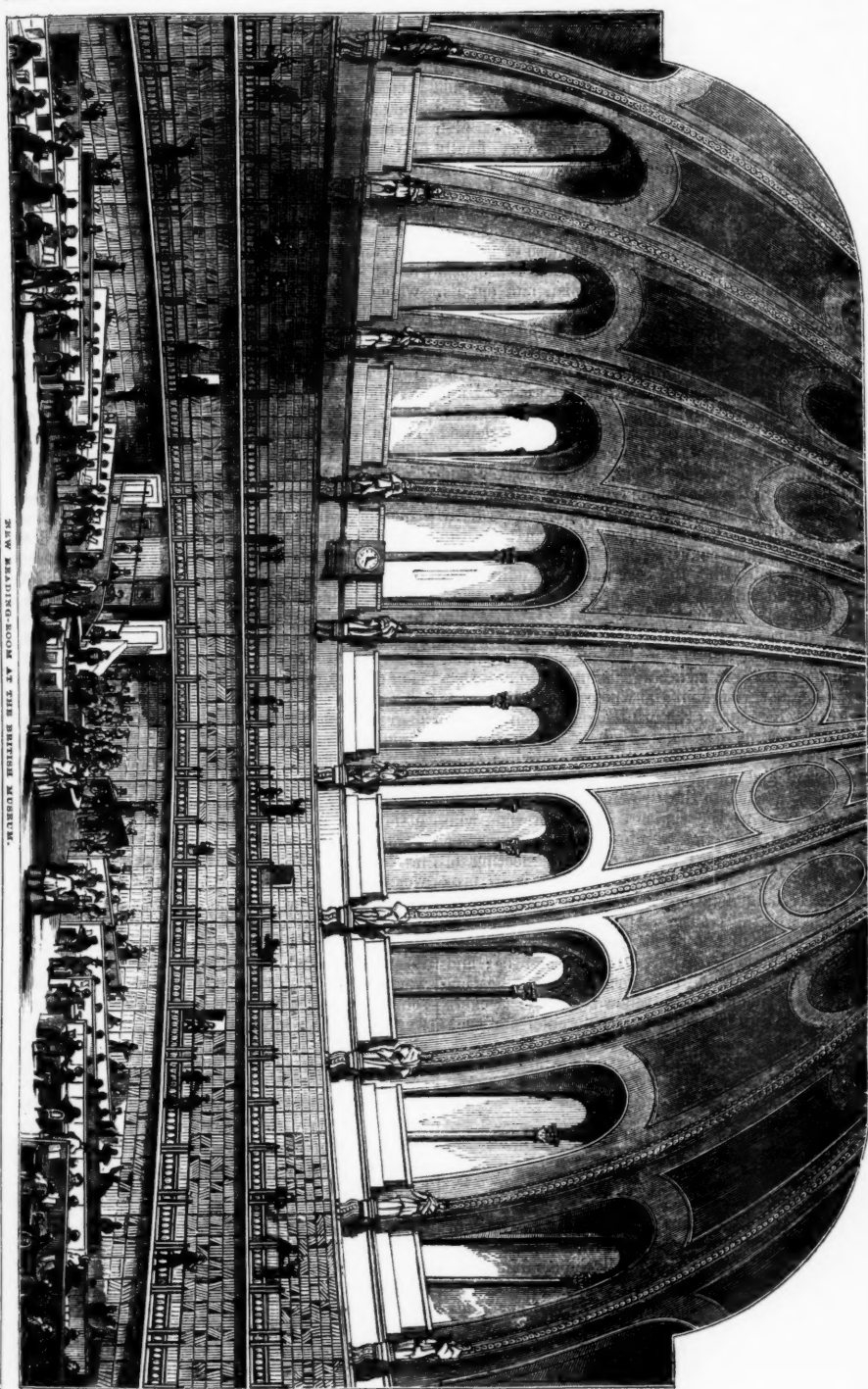
And, first, as to the decoration. One rarely enters a domed apartment without encountering a sense of heaviness and oppression; here, however, all is light, airy, and cheerful. This is owing to the delicacy of the tints employed and the simplicity of the colour. The only hues are light azure, cream colour, and gold; there is no positive

blue, no positive white, either of which would have spoiled the airiness of the effect; and if there is a little too much gold, helping to bring down the dome instead of throwing it up, that defect may vanish as the new gold becomes dim and its metallic mass retires. The cornice from which springs the dome, massive as it is, is almost entirely gilt, and we do not know that we would have had it otherwise; but we would have spared the gold as the roof sprung upwards. The effect is on the whole, however, excellent, and we are not disposed to find fault with what is so good because it might have been better. The predominance of the azure in the panels and the cream-colour in the margins has the like effect here as it has in the sky and cloud of the landscape, and frees the mind from the architectural load which is always apt to press with a leaden weight under a dome.

The subject of ventilation is of still more importance than that of decoration, and judging from the purity and uniform temperature that marks the atmosphere of the vast apartment, it would appear that the attention which has manifestly been paid to this matter has been crowned with unusual success. The measures adopted to secure adequate ventilation have been no trifle. Beneath the whole of the vast area runs an air chamber six feet in depth; which is filled up with hot-water pipes arranged in radiating lines. The supply of fresh air is obtained from a shaft built on the north side of the north wing, communicating with a tunnel having branches or loop lines fitted with valves for diverting the current either wholly through the heating apparatus, or through the cold-air flues, or partly through either, as occasion may require. The air-channels are sufficient to furnish a supply of fresh air for five hundred persons at the rate of ten cubic feet each per minute; these air channels are very numerous, and are concealed in the hollow iron frame-work of the desks; the air being delivered above the level of the readers' heads, and all the outlets are controlled by valves. In hot weather, when the cooler atmosphere within the dome will be heavier than the rarefied air without, steam-pipes placed at the summit of the dome will be heated, and the foul air thus drawn off through the outlets provided for its escape in the soffits of the windows and at the top of the dome.

The cost of completing this superb structure has been £150,000, a sum that appears large for a building which shows no face to the public, and has consequently incurred no expense for external display. But a little examination will show that the work has been executed in a spirit of true economy: a durable structure was indispensable, and durability, therefore, has been the chief object of the builders; the workmanship throughout is of the most finished kind, and the materials used are the most substantial that could be applied to the purpose. The building is constructed principally of iron, upwards of two thousand tons of which have been employed; the quantity of glass used is not less than sixty thousand superficial feet; the wood-work is chiefly British oak; and the fittings-up are all in a style of elaborate finish.

It remains only that we should inform our



readers to whom the credit of the design and execution of this wonderful building is due.

So far back as seven years ago, Mr. Panizzi suggested to the House of Commons a scheme for extending the library of the Museum and erecting a new reading-room. This first plan lay dormant for four years, and was finally abandoned on the ground of the expense it would involve. At the end of this period, Mr. Panizzi proposed to the trustees that a building should be erected in the inner quadrangle of the Museum; by which plan the cost of the purchase of ground would be avoided. He accompanied this proposal with drawings of the ground plan and details. Mr. S. Smirke, the architect, was directed to confer with Mr. Panizzi on his scheme, and reported favourably of it. And on that scheme, as it was first conceived, Parliament having voted the necessary supplies, the work has been carried out to its ultimate completion. For the final success of the great undertaking the public are indebted to others as well as the designer. The architect, Mr. Smirke—the contractors, Messrs. Baker and Fielder, the latter gentleman especially—and several trustees of the Museum—all have worked cordially together to complete an undertaking worthy of the age and of their country; and it is gratifying to be able to add, that the vast and lofty edifice has been reared without the loss of a single life or any serious accident.

If the reader would like to know how he or she may become a student in the new reading-room, and participate in advantages superior to any that are offered throughout the whole world elsewhere, we can only point to the printed regulations, which say: "Persons desirous of admission are to send in their applications in writing (specifying their Christian and surnames, rank or profession, and places of abode), to the Principal Librarian, or, in his absence, to the senior Under Librarian, who will either immediately admit such persons, or lay their applications before the next meeting of the trustees. Every person applying is to produce a recommendation satisfactory to a trustee or an officer of the House. Applications defective in this respect will not be attended to. Permission will in general be granted for six months; and at the expiration of this term fresh application is to be made for a renewal. The tickets given to readers are not transferable, and each person must, if required, produce his ticket. Persons under eighteen years of age are not admissible."

A DAY AT TUNBRIDGE WELLS.

"Bright skies and breezy air,
The song of birds, and merry voice
Of childish sport—by all alike,
We're won to praise and to rejoice."

WITHIN two hours of the metropolis lies one of the most charming regions in the south of England, offering to the visitor all the combined attractions of rural life with the more prosaic conveniences of a watering-place. Any of our readers who have already visited this locality, will doubtless sympathize in the pleasure portrayed in the following paragraphs; and others, haply, may be led thereby to seek for themselves the same fresh and healthy enjoyment.

It was May-day, in 185—, when we first beheld Tunbridge Wells in all the glory of its spring-tide beauty. Late on the preceding evening we had obtained a dim and shadowy glance of the surrounding scenery—a glance which served only to awaken our longing for a daylight view of it. So the morning was yet in its early prime when we gazed out from our open windows on Mount Ephraim upon the world around us. Our eye rested first upon the clustered villas and terraces which lie upon the eastern side of the common—the tall tower of Trinity Church rising in the midst of them, imaging forth that higher life which has its source above, and which imparts strength and peace to the common cares and struggles of humanity. A little further to the south rose Mount Zion, crowned with a grove of venerable trees; while further off the distant view was bounded by elevated uplands, rich in pasture and tillage, with here and there a cluster of trees and a village spire, to tell of the hidden human life which was ebbing and flowing all around.

But attractive as were these more distant objects, our gaze was soon fixed upon the sunny common, which lay in its soft green verdure outspread before us—its wide expanse sloping down to the south, so as to catch every ray of warmth and sunshine. Here, its surface swelled into gentle eminences; there, sank into low winding dells. Large patches of golden-coloured furze glowed and glistened in the sun. Masses of dark grey sandstone, cleft apparently by some convulsion of nature into huge fragments of rock, rose on some of the highest spots, imparting a certain degree of gravity to the cheerful landscape. Amid some of these clustering piles of rocks nestled pretty cottages, so hemmed in by the cliffs as to be scarcely discernible at a little distance, save by the curling smoke which eddied above them. A little lower down was a glassy pool, wherein cattle were slaking their thirst; and as they stood there, mirrored in its clear surface, the group was one worthy of the pencil of Cuyper or Teniers. Even at this early hour, the common was full of life and animation. Milkmen, with their shining pails, were wending their way to different quarters along its beaten paths; travellers were hastening downwards by the shortest cut to the railway station; school-boys were flying their kites; and gentlemen were galloping in every direction across the firm elastic turf. It seemed as if the world at Tunbridge Wells were already wide awake to the cares and recreations of life.

Our earliest visit was, we thought, due to the Wells—properly so called—which lie at the foot of the common; and during our brief but pleasant walk of a quarter of an hour over the downs, we bethought ourselves of the many stirring scenes which during the last two centuries had taken place in this locality. Here it was that, in 1630, Henrietta Maria, then in the plenitude of her royal dignity and domestic happiness, came for a season and dwelt in tents, that she might invigorate her failing health by the use of its mineral waters. At that time only a few poor cottages were grouped around the healing springs. Here it was that, in 1664, Charles II and his unhappy spouse, Catherine of Portugal, came to recreate themselves, and indulged in those fantastic freaks

which have been recorded by the graphic pen of Agnes Strickland. Here, at a later period, the infamous Judge Jefferies walked and talked—a hateful being, and justly loathed by all men. Here, in the memorable year of 1688, Princess Anne of Denmark passed much of her time, listened to Archbishop Tillotson preaching his celebrated sermon on the Ten Virgins, and gave a stone basin for the spring, which until then had issued freely from the soil, and wandered forth, “at its own sweet will,” without let or hindrance from human hands. Here it was that, in 1735, the celebrated Beau Nash, the *arbiter elegantiarum* of Bath, made his appearance, to give laws for his new “colony” of Tunbridge Wells. Such was his power and popularity, that his mandates were obeyed as implicitly as if he were possessed of regal sway, and his proceedings were described as if they were matters of historical importance. Here it was that, only fifty years ago, the most distinguished persons in the fashionable world were wont to dance *al fresco* on the public walks, while the rustics of the neighbourhood thronged around the place, to gaze at the doings of their courtly visitants; nor (when the evening amusements were over) had the fair dames of the vicinity any other mode of conveyance beside a horse and pillion for their homeward ride. Here it was, too, that our present gracious Queen, during the period of her infancy and early childhood, enjoyed many healthful and happy hours.

Such were some of the recollections which rushed to our mind as we approached the Parade, or (as it is still called by the older inhabitants) the Pantiles, this latter name being originally given to it from the walk having been paved with tiles of a peculiar sort. The tiles have been replaced by more modern flagstones; but the name still lives on in the memory and the language of Tunbridge Wells.

Here is a long row of old-fashioned houses, beneath the overhanging upper stories of which is a covered promenade, bordered on one side by handsome shops, and on the other by a wide open walk, sheltered by fine old trees, and having convenient seats for the use of the public. At one end of the Parade are the mineral springs, whose fresh and sparkling waters are presented to visitors by the “dippers,” who are always in attendance for that purpose. Their immediate effect is to stimulate the appetite and to exhilarate the spirits. So wonderful is their effect in some instances, that, on a recent occasion, when a detachment of troops marched through the place, wearied and thirsty, they having drunk freely of the water, showed subsequently on their march every symptom of inebriation.

Having paid our *devoirs* to the nymphs of the well, we returned to the common, and, after ascending the long yet gentle acclivity over the softest, greenest turf possible, we passed through “Victoria Grove,” a double alley of elms, limes, and sycamores, planted on the downs, about twenty years ago, in commemoration of her Majesty’s residence here. A little higher up we seated ourselves beneath the shadow of some sandstone rocks, in order the more leisurely to enjoy the tranquil yet animated beauty of the scene. Scarcely were we seated, when a low musical bell tingled in our

ears. We looked around, and perceived a large flock of Southdown sheep and lambs, with black feet and faces, looking at us with a sort of inquiring interest. The leader, around whose neck was suspended the bell by which we had been startled, was a fine creature, and had a certain air of conscious superiority about him; but he was nevertheless a sociable being, allowing us to stroke his head, and even bending it down to be caressed anew. A little further off two or three donkeys were feasting upon the yellow blossom of the gorse; and some small cattle were basking in the sunshine, ruminating the while with a phlegmatic deliberation almost unworthy of the fragrant herbage which was their food. There were some young ponies near us, whose pleasures were of a far less tranquil sort; for they came bounding along, with their shaggy manes floating in the breeze, leaping over grassy mounds, galloping together round and round the common, as if they were running races after the Roman fashion, without the incumbrance of riders upon their backs. It seemed to us, on looking round at all these different creatures, enjoying themselves after their own peculiar fashion, as if Tunbridge Wells must be the very paradise of the animal world.

Nor was the sight of human amusement and enjoyment lacking to complete the picture. There were little boys building fortifications out of the sand which lay strewed around the rocks; and we overheard the names of allies and of foes, as if they were mimicking in their play the stern realities of war. Others, more adventurous, were clambering up rocks and across chasms to reach the highest summit of the sandstone pile. A large party of schoolboys were collected together on a broad level portion of the common, for the “royal game of cricket.” Further off, a party of young men were assembled for the same purpose. Their pink and blue jackets added to the gaiety of the scene. Many were the lookers-on, who, like ourselves, regarded with interest this manly and healthful sport: ladies and gentlemen, nurses and children, resting on the grass or occupying some of the numerous seats which are placed at intervals upon the common; working men pausing on their way to watch the game; the whole presenting a series of animated out-of-door life but too rarely enjoyed in England. For ourselves, we lingered on until the vulgar necessity of eating drove us home to dinner.

Again, in the evening, we found ourselves, almost intuitively, turning our steps towards the common. This time, we bent our way towards a less frequented part of it, called Bishop’s Down, and proceeding to the pretty church of Rusthall, about a mile distant, we visited a most picturesque region of rocks, one of which—the Toad-rock—looks like a huge petrified monster, brooding over the valley beneath. Here we plunged into green lanes which led us across a small stream into the heart of Hurst wood; a charming ramble, which was rendered still more delightful by the song of nightingales, which poured forth their evening song of praise with such sweet and thrilling melody, that one could only listen and rejoice that such wondrous gifts were bestowed upon the beings of our own prosaic world.

Very reluctantly did we, on the approach of

night, turn towards our temporary home; and never have we, even amid the grander scenery of other countries, forgotten the innocent and healthful enjoyment of that one happy day at Tunbridge Wells.*

PRESCOTT, THE AMERICAN HISTORIAN.

PART II.

HISTORY had always peculiar charms for Prescott, and he cherished the hope that he would be able to realize his day-dreams, and produce a work worthy of the approval of his age and country. The choice of the subject of his first effort indicated at once his genius and conscious power. The reign of Ferdinand and Isabella was fixed upon. It had a special charm for an American, in that it embraced the discovery of the great continent on which he was born, while it had all the attractions which belong to what may be called the romance-period of European history, united with those that cluster around an epoch when the religious and political systems of Europe were revolutionised and reconstructed, and that was distinguished by the appearance of Henry VIII of England, of the statesman Ximenes, of Cordova the soldier, and of the Genoese sailor, Christopher Columbus! The ground might be affirmed to be almost untrodden; for the meagre researches of the Abbé Mignot, and Rupert Becker, were but of little value, and could not be used without verification.

Nothing daunted by the formidable difficulties lying in the way of the accomplishment of his purpose, he addressed himself to his chosen task. His old friend, and, we believe, fellow-student, Mr. A. H. Everett, was then the American Ambassador at the Court of Madrid, and he zealously aided Prescott by collecting valuable authorities, and instituting inquiries, in the public archives and private collections and libraries, after documents illustrative of the reign of which he proposed to treat. This friendly and timely effort was completely successful. In addition to printed authorities, a large number of rare and valuable contemporary manuscripts—many of them previously unknown even to Spanish authors—were transmitted to Boston. But now, when fairly in possession of the materials out of which he could raise the structure he had so long and patiently pictured to himself, they were as useless to him as if they had never existed! By overtaxing his sight, he was unable to read even the title-pages of the volumes, the coming of which he had anticipated with such mingled anxiety and delight. The cup, when brimming and at his lips, was suddenly dashed from them and broken. The dream of long years, when just about to pass into the actual and the abiding, melted into air! Years elapsed before he could use his eye without pain. For the time, he was discomfited, but not subdued. The thought of his Spanish treasures lying unused, grieved him bitterly; and with the energy and determination of despair, as a last resort, he determined to try whether the quick ear and

keenly retentive memory could not be made to do the work of the eyes. His reader was unacquainted with any language but his own; he taught him to pronounce the Spanish while he himself listened with painful attention. At first the work progressed but slowly; practice, however, rendered it easier for both, though the reader never understood a sentence of the author. In this way seven Spanish quartos were mastered. The trial was made. It was successful; and with joy, which none can understand who have not faced and struggled with the almost impossible and unattainable, until they found the despair of the forlorn hope giving way before the signs of victory, Prescott felt that his library was no longer a collection of, to him, "sealed volumes."

His next step was to obtain the services of a gentleman acquainted with ancient and modern languages. Still the obstacles were not few. His eye gradually improved, so that, although he has never been able to use it since in the evening, he could read easily for a few hours each day. The expectations to which this altered condition gave birth were not, however, realized. Intervals of weakness, of frequent recurrence, compelled him to trust to the accuracy of his secretary, and to the fidelity of his own memory and imagination. How manifold the difficulties that he had to surmount may easily be imagined, when the authorities to be consulted were numerous, often obscure, and not seldom conflicting; and when the scene to be depicted depended for its faithfulness upon a minute acquaintance with an almost endless variety of details of colouring, costume, and character. His mode of proceeding was this; first of all, he selected all the authorities in the different languages that bore on the subject in hand. He then had them read to him, while he made copious notes on each. When this was done, and a pile of notes was amassed, these in turn were read to him until the whole were grasped by his mind, and fused down into one of those remarkable chapters in which scenery is painted with the felicity of Scott, the intricacies of diplomacy described with the sagacity of Hallam, and the red rush of war and the desolation of cities with the simple pathos of Thucydides.

In a letter before us, which he addressed to his publishers in New York, the Messrs. Putnam, he describes the manner in which he removed the barrier, created by his incapability of reording with his own hand what he had mastered by the laborious process we have just described. We give it *in extenso*, believing that it will be to our readers as interesting as it is to ourselves, while it may afford encouragement to some who may be appalled in the prosecution of a good and honourable pursuit, by difficulties of a less serious nature. The letter was a reply to a request for a page of Mr. Prescott's manuscript, to be copied in facsimile, for "The Homes of American Authors," a work of great interest to the mere reader, as well as of peculiar value to those who shall hereafter explore, or write, the literary history of the United States.

"Nahant, July 9, 1852.

"My dear Sir—As you desire, I send you a specimen of my autograph. It is the concluding page of one of the chapters of the 'Conquest of

* We beg to acknowledge ourselves indebted for our historical facts to the admirable Guide Book, published by Mr. Colbran, High Street, Tunbridge Wells.

Peru,' book iii, cap. 3. The writing is not, as you may imagine, made by a pencil, but is indelible, being made with an apparatus used by the blind. This is a very simple affair, consisting of a frame of the size of a common sheet of letter-paper with brass wires inserted in it to correspond with the number of lines wanted. On one side of this frame is pasted a leaf of thin carbonated paper, such as is used to obtain duplicates. Instead of a pen, the writer makes use of a stylus of ivory, or agate, the last better or harder. The great difficulties in the way of a blind man's writing in the usual manner, arise from his not knowing when his ink is exhausted in his pen and his lines run into one another. Both difficulties are obviated by this simple writing-case, which enables one to do his work as well in the dark as in the light. Though my trouble is not blindness, but a disorder of the nerve of the eye, the effect, as far as this is concerned, is the same, and I am wholly incapacitated from writing in the ordinary way. In this manner I have written every word of my *historicals*. This *modus operandi* exposes one to some embarrassments; for, as one cannot see what he is doing on the other side of the paper, any more than a performer in the treadmill sees what he is grinding on the other side of the wall, it becomes very difficult to make corrections. This requires the subject to be pretty thoroughly canvassed in the mind, and all the blots and erasures to be made there before taking up the pen, or rather the stylus. This compels me to go over my composition to the extent of a whole chapter, however long it may be, several times in my mind before sitting down to my desk. When there, the work becomes one of memory rather than of creation, and the writing is apt to run off glibly enough. A letter which I received some years since from the French historian, Thierry, who is totally blind, urged me by all means to cultivate the habit of dictation to which he had resorted; and James, the eminent novelist, who has adopted his habits, finds it favourable to facility of composition. But I have been too long accustomed to my own way to change, and, to say the truth, I never dictated a sentence in my life for publication, without its falling so flat on my ear that I felt almost ashamed to send it to the press. I suppose it is habit.

"One thing I may add. My manuscript is usually too illegible (I have sent you a favourable specimen) for the press, and it is always fairly copied by an amanuensis before it is consigned to the printer. I have accompanied the autograph with these explanations, which are at your service, if you think they will have interest for your readers. My *modus operandi* has the merit of novelty, at least I have never heard of any history monger who has adopted it besides myself.—I remain, dear Sir, very truly yours,

"WM. H. PRESCOTT."

In his diary of the year 1819, when the desire to produce a historical work of interest and of worth grew strong within him, he proposed to himself that ten years should be spent in preliminary studies and ten more in its actual production. The result was not far different from what he had anticipated. His first work was given to the world in 1838. Of its success, previously to its publication, he had considerable doubts; so much so,

indeed, that he thought of deferring its appearance until after his death. To his father we are indebted for the setting aside of this determination. When he was consulted on the subject, his reply was: "The man who writes a book which he is afraid to publish is a coward." This decided the question. The rubicon was passed. The work appeared, and, to the amazement of the author more than to any one else, it attained to immediate popularity in Europe, as well as in his own land. With his characteristic modesty, he had underestimated the value of his performance; but the approving verdict of the literary tribunals on both sides of the Atlantic, and the translations made into Spanish, German, French, and Italian, declared it to be a work that placed its author in the front rank of great historians.

Prescott did not exhaust himself by this effort; it was but the trial of his strength. He sought no repose after nearly twenty years of toilsome labour, but addressed himself with energies freshened by success to gather new laurels in the field where his brilliant *début* had been made. His reputation added to his facilities. He was made a member of the Royal Academy of Madrid; and its invaluable collections by Munõz, by Ponce, and by other learned and eminent persons, were thrown open to him, with the permission to copy whatever was of use to him. These collections were the result of at least half a century of diligent and careful research, and they placed within his reach information which he could not have gained elsewhere, relative to the conquest and settlement of Mexico and Peru. He was also significantly favoured by the descendant and representative of Cortes—the Duke of Monteleone of Sicily—who generously gave him access to the archives of his family. From Mexico itself he received important aid; indeed, so numerous, various, valuable, and unique were the materials by which he was surrounded when he sat down to the composition of the "History of the Conquest of Mexico," that its success could be affirmed before a line was written.

The issue realized the anticipation. The American publishers sold nearly seven thousand volumes in the first year. Several editions have since been published in this country, in Berlin, Paris, Rome, and Mexico.

His last work, the "History of the Reign of Phillip II," has proved equally popular with its predecessors, and has increased the admiration which prevailed wherever he was known, for not only his genius, but his unconquerable energy and determination. If in nothing else, in this, the old puritan blood makes itself visible, and recalls the heroic but calm resolve of the men who left the homes of their fathers and the graves of their kindred, for the wild shores of New England and liberty of conscience. It is the same stern and strong purpose showing itself in another direction—enabling the almost sightless to attempt and to conquer difficulties sufficient to daunt men of accomplished minds and rich endowments enjoying the inestimable but oft unvalued gift of sight.

In private life, few men are more beloved than Mr. Prescott. One who knows him well, says: "He is not more remarkable for his abilities than for his amiability, simplicity, and high-bred courtesy. He is one of those men who are a blessing

as well as an honour to the community in which they live.* He lives in an unostentatious style, dividing his year between his three residences, in Beacon-street, Boston; Nahant, a wild sea-side spot where he usually spends the sultry summer months; and at Pepperell, where he has a farm that has been in the family upwards of a hundred and fifty years—rather a rare thing, by the way, in a land where the prairie field of a year ago is to-day a populous city! In this latter place, he sees the leaf changing its colour from green to gold and russet, and the autumn gently glide into winter; the hoarse voice of which sends him back again to the snug house near Boston common.

And now we must close our sketch, hoping, although his days are in "the sere and yellow leaf," that Mr. Prescott may be spared for many years to come, and be enabled to give to the world further proofs of his unflagging industry, his wide research, his remarkable genius and historic skill and fidelity—works that shall also, like those that already bear his name, clearly unfold the causes of national prosperity and decay, and thereby incontestably demonstrate to every thoughtful reader the existence and ceaseless operation of the moral government of God.

MANCHESTER ART TREASURES.

THIRD PAPER.

BRITISH PORTRAIT GALLERY, SCULPTURES, ETC.

To the student of history and biography, to him especially whose favourite subjects of study are the celebrated characters, whether illustrious or infamous, who have figured in the history of Britain, this unrivalled gallery of British Portraits will probably present the most attractive feature in the Palace of Art. These portraits hang on the walls of the great central hall, right and left; they are between three and four hundred in number; the large majority of them have high claims as works of art, being from the pencils of Vandyke, Lely, Kneller, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Beechey, Lawrence, Raeburn, Shee, Jackson, Pickersgill, and others; most of whom were among the first portrait painters of this, or any other, country.

In the collection and preparation of this gallery, a double object has been kept in view. It was of course desirable to bring together as many of the worthies (or unworthies) of the past centuries as could be procured, whose presence might serve to illustrate the history of their times; but it was also desirable, as Mr. Cunningham states, "to illustrate the condition of art in England at a period when portraits were our only pictures, and portrait painters almost our only artists." We must candidly acknowledge that both these objects have been achieved with success, so far as success was possible; and it has happily proved possible to a much greater extent than most reflecting persons, accustomed to consider the doctrine of probabilities, and aware of the hindrances that might stand in the way, would be led to expect. The collection is rich beyond precedent, not only in historical and biographical value, but in artistic excellence; and it has been carefully arranged in chronological order for the convenience of the spectator.

* Griawold's "Prose Writers of America," p. 373.

The series commences as early as the reign of Richard the Second, and continues without any hiatus of importance which it would be possible to fill up, down to the present generation, or that at least which is now just 'passing away. In some places, as one walks along through this cloud of silent witnesses, we see the good and the bad, the famous and the infamous, the instructors and the corruptors of mankind, in strange juxtaposition; but that is no more than we should have seen had we looked upon their living forms instead of these unbreathing semblances, and no more than we do see now when we look abroad upon the world around us. Thus John Wycliffe is neighboured by Jane Shore and the third Richard; sylvan Evelyn is elbowed by Jacob Hall, the rope-dancer; Handel pairs with the "bad Lord Lyttelton;" and so on.

So far from finding fault with this arrangement, however, we accept it as the natural and fit one, and shall proceed as we glance along the series to point out a few of the most notable characters of the several centuries, upon whose *veræ effigies* the visitor may pause and ponder with advantage. Perhaps the full length, by Holbein, of Catherine Parr is the first reliable portrait in the list. Then comes Queen Elizabeth, and a little farther on Sir Walter Raleigh, by Zuccheri, who also has painted Lady Arabella Stuart. But the gem of this part of the series is the picture by Mytens of Charles the First, his Queen, and the dwarf Hudson, setting forth for the hunt. Then there is Jansen's Duke of Buckingham, the Chandos head of Shakespeare; the picture of Ben Jonson that was engraved by Vertue and belonged to Harley; the portrait of Shirley, author of the well-known verses, "Sceptre and crown must tumble down;" Taylor, the water-poet, almost cheek-by-jowl with Archbishop Laud, by Vandyke; Sir Hugh Myddelton, who brought the New River to London; Vandyke's Earl of Strafford in armour; Prince Rupert, by the same hand; King Charles I and family: Earl Cavendish and his brother; the Earl of Bedford; the Duke of Richmond and Duke Hamilton, with a band of cotemporary nobles, forming a galaxy of splendid Vandykes such as was never assembled before.

Then comes the stern-faced Oliver, in breastplate and buff, and truncheon in hand, marshalling the way for John Hampden, Sir John Eliot, and John Pym, patriots and statesmen of the commonwealth. There is Pennington, Charles's admiral of the fleet; Lord Brooke (Greville), killed at the siege of Lichfield; Sir Charles Lucas, shot by Fairfax after the siege of Colchester; Fairfax himself, in armour; the brave Countess of Derby, who defended Latham House; Spencer Compton, Earl of Northampton, killed at Hopton Heath; and the renowned Admiral Blake, who founded the naval supremacy of Britain. To these may be added the names of almost every man and woman historically of note, who figured during the progress of that revolution which will ever form the most picturesque and romantic period in the past annals of our country. Among them hang heroes and worthies of another and more peaceful class, their contemporaries, whose fame has come down to us connected with deeds, worthy or hateful, of a different kind. There is Cowley, the poet; the handsome, proud Lovelace; John Selden, antiquary, and author

of the celebrated "Mare Clausum;" Sir Thomas Browne, author of the "Religio Medici;" Thomas Hobbes, the bold infidel of Malmesbury; Edmund Waller, first the satirist, and then the adulator of royalty; Butler, the author of "Hudibras;" and Harvey, who discovered the circulation of the blood—men whose reputation will outlast that of the dukes, the earls, and the princes of the blood with whom they take equal rank on these walls, but who might hardly have condescended to exchange a word with them in their lifetime.

Passing over the court of Charles the Second, with the bevy of "fair vices" painted by Lely and Kneller, we may dwell on the face of William the Third when he was Prince of Orange, ere the perplexities of his grand enterprise or the responsibilities of state had furrowed his brow—on the calm majestic face of Sir Isaac Newton, the intellectual giant who fathomed the far depths of space and wrung from the revolving worlds the mystery of the law that regulates their motions—on that of John Locke, the accomplished thinker—on the face of the frivolous but practical Pepsys, or of the gentlemanly Evelyn, and others of no less note, among whom is Sir Christopher Wren.

Next we have a full length of Queen Anne, by Closterman; another of Handel, by Hudson, Reynolds's master. Then there is a half-length of the great Duke of Marlborough, by Kneller; by whose side hangs the head of Grinling Gibbons, also a carver, not in blood, but in wood.

Our first introduction to the house of Hanover is a painting of King George the First when a boy, in the character of Cupid, and executed by his own mother, the Electress Sophia. It is rare at all times, but it was specially rare in those days, for royal fingers to meddle with the painter's palette; but the Electress Sophia was taught painting by Honthorst, and loved the art. This, so far as we know, is the only one of her performances publicly exhibited, though she produced a large number of pictures, and it is said that the first Lord Craven inherited many of them. Not far from the Royal Cupid hangs a portrait of the celebrated Dr. Mead, by the side of one of Sir Isaac Newton in his old age, painted by Thornhill, the father-in-law of Hogarth. Then we have the young Pretender; and a step or two farther Tickell, the poet, and friend of Addison, who introduces us to Tonson the bookseller, Dryden, Vanbrugh, Congreve, Sir Richard Steele, and Addison himself. We have now arrived among the literary luminaries of what has been called the Augustan age of English literature; we need not catalogue their names, which will occur to the reader's memory; while their portraits are not likely to be passed over by the visitor.

At this stage it is that we are able to recognise the revival of English portrait-painting under Sir Joshua Reynolds and his contemporaries and successors. The first head of Reynolds's on the list is that of the good Lord Lyttleton, the poet and historian. Then Gainsborough follows, with Garrick and his wife. To these succeed a list of royal and remarkable personages, by painters no less remarkable, among which we may particularize George the Third and also his Queen, by Reynolds; Warren Hastings, by the same; Lord St. Vincent, by Beechey; Admiral Earl Howe, by Gainsborough;

Samuel Johnson, by Gainsborough; James Boswell, by Reynolds; Edward Gibbon, the historian, by the same; Sir Joshua Reynolds himself, in his spectacles; Gainsborough, also by himself; Richard Wilson, the English Claude, by Raphael Mengs; Hume, the historian, by Allan Ramsay; General Wolfe, by Dance; Robert Burns, by Alexander Nasmyth; Pitt, by Gainsborough; Roscoe and Dr. Priestley, by Shee; Sir Joseph Banks, by Phillips; Dr. Dalton, by Allen; Dr. Wollaston, by Jackson; Sir Humphrey Davy, by Lawrence; Sir Walter Scott, by Raeburn; Byron, Crabbe, Southey, and Coleridge, by Phillips; Gifford, by Hoppner; Lockhart, by Pickersgill; Samuel Rogers, by Lawrence; and John Keats, by Severn.

Thus much for a cursory glance, in which we have noted down only such of the personages as struck us most forcibly in a single stroll through the gallery. We have said but little of warriors, nobles, and sovereigns; not that we did not see them, for they are here in sufficient plenty, and so far as the surface area of canvas is concerned, they are by far the most prominent objects in the collection. More interesting to us, however, and probably to our readers, are the silent faces of those whose deeds have a biographical value, for good or for ill, independent of their social position when in life. Not that we have mentioned all or even half of these; we can make no pretensions to an accurate survey, even of the class of characters we most affect: the collection is so large and so replete with interest of the highest kind, that one had need live for a month or two among these pictured memories of the dead to become adequately acquainted with them. The visitor who has the leisure thoroughly to study this collection, may make of it a kind of biographical history of the literature, the statesmanship, the heroism and the follies of the past three centuries, and something more. It is likely that he may derive from it more incentives to melancholy meditation upon the weaknesses of human nature and the vanity of human ambition, than motives for triumph in the success even of the noblest endeavours. He will see, as he traverses the gallery from end to end, that among the proudest faces that seem to watch his progress, numbers of the sternest, the grandest, and the most memorable, have fallen beneath the hands of the executioner on the public scaffold—that numbers more have perished in battle on foreign shores, or fallen in fields of civil slaughter at home—that some have been the victims of the foulest treachery; while others, the ministers of crime and violence, have succumbed miserably to retribution and the pangs of remorse. So sad is the history of man's life! On the other hand, he may gather heart and courage in well-doing from the honest aspect of many a persevering doer of the world's work, and the lofty look of many a true hero who fought the battle of life in the spirit of true chivalry, which is that of self-sacrifice and devotion to the good of others. So cheering, also, is the history of man's life!

Parallel with the portraits on the walls, and ranged on pedestals on either side of the nave, for the most part, is found a striking collection of the finest works of the modern British school of sculpture. Some of these we think are open to objection, at least as objects of public exhibition, on the

score of public decency, which might have been complimented by their absence or their seclusion from the general gaze. In the mass, however, they display a very high order of talent, and place the modern school of sculpture upon a high eminence.

In grim contrast to the pure marble sculptures, and yet in a manner mingled with them on both sides of the nave, are a series of mailed figures clad in the armour of the feudal ages, some of them mounted on chargers in full panoply, and with lance in rest, rushing to the deadly encounter. These figures, which are something too terribly impressive, are designed, together with the collection of ancient arms and armour accompanying them, to illustrate the history of medieval warfare, before gunpowder was invented. Those times were called, *par excellence*, the chivalrous times; but we confess, for our own parts, that we fail to recognise the chivalry of a custom which arrayed the noble, who could afford to pay for it, in all but impenetrable armour, and launched him thus arrayed against the poor, undefended, and "wretched kernes" and villains who were compelled to fight in the ranks of his antagonist: with which remark we shall, somewhat abruptly, close the present brief paper.

MODELS FOR MEN OF BUSINESS.

A BLESSING which real religion confers on its mercantile possessor is, moderation in prosperity. "He that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent." "But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth." "If rich, be not too joyful in having, too solicitous in keeping, too anxious in increasing, nor too sorrowful in losing." These golden sentences were inscribed on the account-books of a London merchant, who, not content with writing them in his books, embodied them in the consistent practice of fifty years. The Lord gave him power to get wealth, and just when he was on the way to get a great deal more, he said, "It is enough," and, retiring from a prosperous trade, devoted his remaining years to doing good. His income was not great, but he had once been happy with a great deal less; and though he might have lived his remaining years up to that income, there was one thing which hindered him. "None of us liveth to himself." "Ye are bought with a price." And accordingly, when one day he took a young friend to see Abney Park, at that time offered for sale, and had shown him with enthusiasm, the house where Dr. Watts so long resided, the room in which he composed his beautiful works, the bed-room where he slept, and the turret on the roof, where he used to sit gazing on the scenery—his companion wondered that he did not buy the place and live in it. "I might," was his answer, "but to live here would consume all my income, and nothing would compensate for the pleasure I have in living within my income, that I may serve God with the surplus." And that moderate income, blessed by God and wisely expended, was the means of providing more places of evangelic worship in this metropolis, and raising up more faithful ministers, than any single income ever did since the days of Lady Huntingdon. The horse-leech hath seven daughters, saying, Give, give, and the love of money hath as many, saying, Get, get, and the only antidote to this self-feeding rapacity is the gospel. The only man who ever found a competency is the man who has found in godliness with contentment great gain. When business prospers, he can still live on little, and give a large amount away; and he

can even achieve the prodigy at which so many marvel—retire from a thriving business, and bid adieu to boundless prospects, in order to live on a limited or lessened revenue.

Another benefit of true piety is the support which it affords its possessor in a season of commercial calamity. We have few more delightful biographies than that of Joseph Williams. He was a carpet manufacturer at Kidderminster, a hundred years ago; and in a letter to Mr. Walker of Truro, he says: "I am an old man; a tradesman also of no small account in this neighbourhood; but I trust my more beloved, because more gainful, traffic lies in a far country. Grace unknown, though not unfelt, put me in this way forty-four years ago. I was then inclined to seek goodly pearls, and having found one pearl of great price, I was willing to sell all and buy it. And now my traffic is to the country beyond Jordan, and my chief correspondence with the King of Zion, a good friend to merchantmen. He first condescended to traffic with me, furnished me with the stock, made me many valuable remittances, and hath firmly assured me of a great and good inheritance to which I am to sail and take possession, as soon as I shall be ready for it, and our mutual interest will be thereby best promoted. And I have so high an opinion of Zion's king, and can so firmly rely on his promises, that I look on my said possession as a done thing, for, indeed, he hath confirmed his promises by many undeniable pledges." This happy old Christian was tried at his outset by heavy losses which nearly overwhelmed him; but his heart was fixed, and in the midst of all his anxieties and disasters, we find him saying: "Surely I find my soul growing in submission to God's will, and in delight in God and in duty. Surely I am enabled to love God more, not only by means of this trial, but for it." And the steady hand with which he carried the cup of prosperity when full, and the serene countenance with which he drank the cup when embittered, the meekness and modesty with which he sustained success, and the perfect peace which he enjoyed when in danger of losing all, were the result of the selfsame thing. He had commenced his business with God, and with God in prayer and consultation he carried it on. Or, as he himself expressed it, "he traded for Christ." There was in partnership with him a wonderful counsellor, to whom he could resort in every dilemma, and who could send him supplies in the most wonderful ways—a friend as wise as he was kind, who kept him from losing courage in the most threatening conjunctures, and who kept his heart from breaking in the most crushing disasters. And so, dear sirs, if you would secure a blessing on your business, let it be your first concern to consecrate that business. Let each dedicate his traffic even as he dedicates himself and his household to the Lord.

When Mr. Charles Grant was the East India Company's commercial resident at Malta, the profits of his office were so great that after a few years he sent his books to Bengal to be examined, stating that he was making money so fast that he feared it could not all be correct, though he himself could not find out the mistake. But the Governor-General instantly returned them unopened, bidding him keep his mind quite easy, and telling him that nobody except himself was troubled with such nervousness. And it would be easy to quote abundant instances where uprightness and integrity have made the Christian stand out in bright relief, and have wrung even from a reluctant world, a moment's plaudit or the more solid tribute of lasting respect and confidence. And this is the best service which any man can render to the gospel, the most precious and welcome of all contributions—the contribution of a consistent character.—*Dr. James Hamilton.*